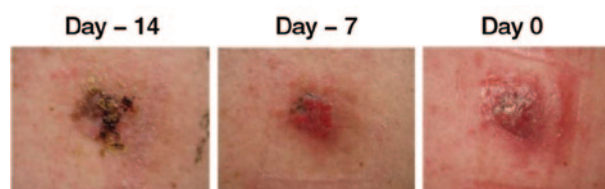
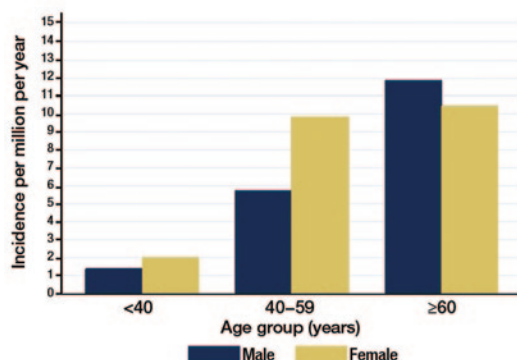


## Topical Immune Boost

Immune-stimulating agents have been suggested to provide immunoprotective benefits to melanoma patients when used prior to surgical tumor removal. To examine the effects of imiquimod, the synthetic Toll-like receptor 7 agonist typically used in such a situation for topical treatment of genital warts, superficial basal cell carcinoma, and actinic keratosis, Narayan and colleagues conducted a pilot study of 14 individuals who had primary melanoma tumors with a Breslow thickness  $>1.0$  mm. Topical imiquimod treatment elevated levels of CD4<sup>+</sup> and CD8<sup>+</sup> lymphocytes in the skin and in the draining lymph nodes compared with placebo treatment, supporting additional clinical investigation into the use of this therapy for melanoma. **See page 163**



## Risky Blisters



A higher risk of death among pemphigus patients was previously reported in a hospital-based study. Huang and colleagues investigated mortality from pemphigus in a large representative cohort of 853 patients from Taiwan and compared these data with those for the general population. This study revealed a pemphigus incidence of 4.7 cases per million per year in Taiwan. Furthermore, survival in patients diagnosed with pemphi-

gus was significantly lower than in the general population, with an overall 2.36-fold higher mortality for the pemphigus patients. Interestingly, these patients have a higher risk of mortality from systemic and respiratory tract infections, cardiovascular disease, and peptic ulcer disease compared with the general population. **See page 92**

## Baby on Board

Inflammation, such as that experienced with psoriasis, can be associated with adverse pregnancy outcomes such as preterm birth (PTB) and low birth weight (LBW). Lima and colleagues found that women with psoriasis had an increased risk of both PTB and LBW as compared with non-psoriasis patients in a retrospective cohort study. These results emphasize the necessity of control of psoriasis before conception and during pregnancy. This goal is a real possibility now that new treatment options are available and their safety in pregnancy is being evaluated. **See page 85**



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## Move through the Light

Although allogeneic hematopoietic cell transplantation (allo-HCT) is potentially lifesaving for leukemia, lymphoma, and myeloma patients, development of graft-versus-host disease (GvHD) following transplantation is a dangerous possibility. Kreutz and colleagues demonstrated that whole-body broadband UVB irradiation at the time of allo-HCT is safe, and that the resultant Langerhans cell depletion was associated with decreased acute GvHD in these transplantation patients. In particular, UVB exposure led to increased levels of immunosuppressive 25-hydroxyvitamin D3 and increased circulating T regulatory cells. Future studies will assess the clinical benefits of prophylactic UVB exposure with allo-HCT to prevent GvHD. **See page 179**

## More Filaggrin, Please

Increased risk of atopic dermatitis (AD) is associated with null mutations in the filaggrin gene (*FLG*), which also exhibits copy number variation (CNV) at the DNA level. Brown and colleagues employed PCR-based genotyping strategies to determine whether CNV within the *FLG* gene affected AD risk in a case-control study of 925 pediatric AD cases and 998 controls. A significantly higher copy number was found in the controls than in the AD cases, indicating that CNV within *FLG* affects AD risk in a dose-dependent manner and that therapeutically increasing filaggrin expression may be beneficial in AD. **See page 98**